

# KEEPING safe & secure

## After drug dealers move in, neighborhoods can rapidly deteriorate

Drugs devastate not only those who are addicted but entire neighborhoods. Once drug dealers move in, neighborhoods will deteriorate rapidly. If permanent residents take no action to run them out, dealers will become bolder each day. This will also attract other dealers and an increasing number of undesirable people to the area. If they know they can intimidate you, they will.

In order to protect your neighborhood from invading drug dealers, there are some things you can do:

1. Get organized! Hold monthly neighborhood meetings with as many of your neighbors as you can. This will allow you all to get to know each other and build a support system based on strength in numbers. Rental property owners in the neighborhood should also be invited to the meetings. A local drug task force officer should be asked to attend to teach you what resources are available to your neighborhood group.
2. If you do not already have a "Neighborhood Watch Program," contact your local police force and ask them to help you set one up.

3. Keep the lines of communication open with the police. You don't need ironclad evidence in order to ask the police to get involved. A reasonable suspicion of criminal activity is enough.
4. If you see what appears to be drug activity - don't try to be a hero. People using and dealing drugs are very unpredictable and can be dangerous - even deadly.
5. The who, what, when, and where of every drug related incident should be written down, in detail, by the person who sees it and reported to the police as soon as possible. Documenting a suspected drug deal is vital to ridding your streets of these criminals.
6. Witnesses are very important in the conviction of these criminals. It is not always easy to get people to come forward. However, if you and your neighbors stick together, the drug dealers will realize you mean business - which is no good for their business.
7. Remember: The best defense is a good offense. Be organized and unified in efforts to make yours a safe and drug-free community.

## Help From Your Assemblymember

If no local laws or community programs exist in your area and you cannot get satisfactory response or action from your local government officials, I would like to help you. Please contact my office. I will have a field representative meet with your neighborhood group and help you voice your concerns to your city's officials.



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## No Drugs Here!

A Guide to Fighting Drugs In Your Neighborhood







# keeping your NEIGHBORHOOD safe & secure

## How do I recognize a drug dealer's house?

No neighborhood is perfect. However, when drugs and drug dealers move in, you and your neighbors must be able to recognize who they are and where they are located in order to protect your children and save your neighborhood.

With personal safety in mind, keep a watchful eye out for the following:

- People loitering around a certain house, apartment, or street corner.
- People coming and going from a particular house or apartment at odd hours.
- Frequent car traffic for short periods of time, or leaving the engine running while they go inside.
- Blankets or tin foil hung over drapes or blinds.
- Groups of people who break up or become quiet when you get close.
- Litter such as home made pipes, liquor bottles, rolling papers, whole matchbooks that have been burned, used syringes, small baggies, etc.
- Constant rowdiness of residents or their visitors.
- Never being able to tell who actually lives there.
- Unusual or "chemical" smells coming from a house or apartment.
- Gang activity or "territorial" graffiti.

## How can I recognize someone on drugs?

A person who is using drugs shows physical signs which can be readily recognized. The following chart will help you know what to look for.

### ***How drugs look and act:***

#### **Marijuana**

Bloodshot eyes, coughs a lot, smells like a burning rope, can't concentrate, bad memory, laughs a lot for no reason, lazy, sleepy all the time.

#### **Speed**

Large pupils, rapid breathing, not hungry, talks all the time, can't sleep, can't stand still.

#### **Cocaine**

Large pupils, runny or bleeding nose, rapid breathing, can't stand still, changes from happy to sad to happy again for no reason, can't sleep.

#### **Sedatives**

Slurred speech, acts drunk, can't keep balance, shallow and slow breathing, aggressive and hostile.

#### **Heroin**

Very small pupils, shallow and slow breathing, sleepy, acts like in a dream world.

#### **Angel Dust/LSD**

Large pupils, confused and disoriented, sees things that aren't there, can't feel pain, has unusual eye movement, withdraws from people.

## Rental property alert:

Working closely with your rental property neighbors to fight drugs makes sense to protect your investment and to fulfill part of your responsibilities as a good neighbor.

The proper screening of prospective tenants is your first line of defense. The first step in an effective screening process is a clear and reasonable rental policy in writing.

Drug dealers often have false identification and references. They may say they are self-employed. These things can easily be checked out and will protect you and your neighbors.

### **Remember landlords, you can be held legally responsible**

if you know of a drug problem at your rental property and do nothing about it.

## What are the laws & resources in my community?

Section 11570 of the California Health and Safety Code says that any building used for the purpose of unlawfully selling, serving, storing, keeping, or giving away an illegal drug is considered a nuisance.

When a nuisance is found in an apartment complex or house, the police will take action and the property can be shut down (not able to be rented) for up to one year. The owner of the property can be fined up to one year's rent if he or she knew of the problem and did nothing about it.

Many cities and counties have passed local laws that are more strict than the state law and have developed programs to teach city residents what to do to get rid of a drug problem in their neighborhood.

To find out if there are local drug nuisance laws and community self-help programs in your city, call your local police or sheriff's department.